Plot………………………………

An Afghan family, mother, father and five children (boy, girl, girl, girl, boy)

* Father loathes mother and children apart from youngest son
* It was arranged marriage so mother didn’t have choice
* Father physically maltreats mother and four children
* Oldest son is taken for army work
* In a fit of anger shoots at two youngest girls, killing youngest and injuring other
* Mother decides to leave with her two boys and eldest girl, leaving injured girl with friends
* Eldest boy is shot in Pakistan by fathers friends
* Mother and now two children leave for New Zealand

Boy=Hamasa=heroic act

Girl=Asal =honey

Girl=Muzhdah=wonderful news

Girl=Hasti=existence

Boy=Rashidi=rightly guided

Outside the city, the desert sand lashed out against the walls, as if releasing the frustration, the anger and the hate for the unjust war and Taliban interference affecting everyday lives. For as long as anyone could remember, Afghanistan had been the victim of tragic war circumstances, the nation had been ruled by inhumane leaders, cruel, evil rulers, men with unnatural desires.

**CHAPTER 1**

Kabul…………….

On the third floor of a building, bearing the evidence of war tragedy, Asal glanced out over the city ruins, clearly displaying the marks of war. Behind her and in front of her, the evidence of unjust behavior lay, in the room where she stood, and in the city out below…... In her arms, her baby brother Rashidi lay, silent, very much aware, despite his young age, of the situation. Asal’s two upset younger sisters stood around her, sadly watching their mother, who lay on the floor, cringing and whimpering taking the cruel force of her husband’s angry blows. Asal’s elder brother, Hamasa was vainly attempting to protect his mother from the harsh, swift blows brought by his father. The terrified sisters had been ‘taught’ long ago not to interfere. For once, their mother agreed with this advice and insisted that her five children stay well back during their father’s violent fits of anger. But Hamasa refused to watch his mother unjustly and harshly beaten by her own husband, so insisted that he would, perhaps vainly, attempt to protect his mother. Nothing could be done lawfully to prevent such harsh treatment, as the government fully approved of husbands maltreating their wives according to the man’s wishes. Woman and girls have no place…...

The night was very dark, very hot and very still. Yet despite the peacefulness, unease hung in the air, the peaceful breathing of Asal’s brothers and sisters beside her was as it should be, but something was not right. Next to her, her mother was sitting on a chair weeping silently. Then suddenly it dawned on her, her father’s harsh breathing and snores were not to be heard. Where was he? As she sat up, all of a sudden she noticed, her younger brother Rashidi had gone. He was the only child who Asal’s father did not despise. The little infant was very quiet, (he hardly ever cried,) and quite adorable, naturally Asal’s Father loved him, he considered the little child a treasure beyond replacement. And yet he despised the rest of his family. He loathed his wife, and because the marriage was arranged, she had had no choice but to marry as her former family commanded it. If she had attempted to escape and run away, she would be soon brought back and would live the rest of her life with even less freedom and love with her original family. So she was trapped, unable to escape, because it was quite beyond her power. It was if her children and their father were completely different, as if they weren’t even related…..... But where were Rashidi and Asal’s father? Although it appeared to be the middle of the night, all Asal wanted to do was to get up and find out what was wrong, find out where Rashidi and where her father was. As she stirred to get up, her mother noticed and with a tear stained face, came over to her.

“Where’s Rashidi?” enquired Asal,

Silence………….

“Where is he?” Asal demanded beginning to feel anxious,

“………gone……. your ………father has………has taken him” Whispered her mother,

“But ………but why?”

“He has gone elsewhere, taken the only person he loved” muttered her mother bitterly. “Gone, never to return.”

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